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AUTHOR	Carter, Heather L.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

An investigation identified environmental factors influencing the activities of university-based teacher educators and described the interaction effect of environmental factors and selected faculty roles. Environmental factors examined were personal influences, the departmental promotion and salary committee, central university administration, national professional organizations, federal and state governments, accrediting and certification agencies, and public schools. The interaction effect of these factors was explored as they influenced teacher educators in two different faculty roles--rank and teaching assignment (campus vs. field based). Interviews were conducted with 7 assistant professors, 11 associate professors, and 4 full professors. Seven of these teacher educators were exclusively campus-based faculty members, 4 were public-school-based, and 11 had mixed responsibilities. The perceived influence of the departmental promotion and salary committee declined across ranks. While assistants indicated this factor to be one exerting rather high pressure, it was deemed less important by associate and full professors. Personal influence was high across all ranks, particularly as it reflected self-esteem. Federal and state government influence was perceived as an important factor by all ranks because government agencies awarded research grants and established public school policies. The perceived influence of national professional networks increased with rank. Influence from the university, beyond the department, was not apparent among assistant professors and was apparent to the greatest degree in associate professors. Faculty working mainly in the field did not see accrediting and certification agencies or government agencies as strong influences, while the reverse was true of campus-based faculty. (JD)

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The Relative Force of Selected Environmental Factors Upon the Professional Activities of University-Based Teacher Educators

HEATHER L. CARTER, MARK ISHAM and ROSCOE STRIBLING

The University of Texas at Austin

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It is obvious, even to the point of being a truism, that environmental factors influence the actions of individuals with different results. Teacher educators are not atypical; they too are influenced by a variety of environmental factors in the course of their professional activities. The investigation described in this report attempted to:

1. identify environmental factors influencing the activities of university based teacher educators.
2. describe the interaction effect of environmental factors and selected faculty roles.

Three sets of literature informed this investigation. The sociological study of school teachers by Lortie (1975) and the studies of teacher educators by Joyce (1977) provided background for the identificaton of possible influences upon teacher educators. The ERIC publication (1978) entitled "The Academic Workplace: Opportunities for Professional Renewal" highlighted factors of concern when studying the roles of professional persons.

In a paper entitled "Toward Identifying the Abilities of Teacher Educators" (Cruickshank, 1977), procedural steps are outlined. One of these steps is "... soliciting teacher educator abilities from teacher educators themselves..."; this was the method employed in the study. It is understood that the large number of limitations imposed by self reporting techniques was recognized.

In this investigation the environmental factors selected for consideration were, in addition to personal influences, the departmental promotion and a salary committee, central university administration, national professional organizations, federal and state governments, accrediting and certification agencies, and public school personnel. Two faculty roles were identified: rank and teaching assignment (campus vs. field based).

Certain definitions were established for the purpose of sample selection and data analysis:

Teacher educator A tenure track faculty member who had taught at least one undergraduate course designed for preservice teachers within the last calendar year. Each faculty member held an appointment in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

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The study was limited to tenure track faculty because it was considered that teaching assistants and assistant instructors are, first, graduate students and, second, faculty members thus forming a different population. Faculty members outside the Department of Curriculum and Instruction were not included in the study because of the extremely small representation from any single area. The responsibility of faculty in each area are considerably different from one another and also from those of teacher educators in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Their inclusion could have created a potential confounding influence.

Influence A perceived negative or positive force upon the subject described in response to any question within that portion of the interview relating to the interviewees activities as a teacher educator.

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No differentiation was made between influences described as powerful and those of lower power because of the small sample size. Such considerations would be valuable and possible with a larger sample.

Personal influence Any influence stated to be from the individual faculty member and not from an outside force. The findings reported in this paper are part of a larger study, but the procedures for the entire study will be described here. An interview schedule was developed to consider many aspects

of a teacher educator's background, preparation, values, goals and activities. The interview, conducted in the faculty member's office, lasted approximately one hour and was conducted by one of two trained interviewers. Before the study began all of the subjects signed informed consent forms and the principal investigator and the interviewer signed sheets to guarantee privacy of data. The interviews were conducted during the Spring of 1980 with 22 subjects. The sample was composed of seven assistant professors, eleven associate professors and four professors. Seven were exclusively campus based faculty members, four largely school based and eleven had mixed responsibilities.

Analysis and Discussion

The data were analyzed by mapping in turn rank and faculty assignment on to the identified environmental variables. Considerable caution must be exercised in interpreting the data because of the single campus factor and the small size of the sample. However, certain comments can be made.

A Faculty role - professional rank

Insert TABLE ONE about here

1. Departmental promotion and salary committee

An obvious change in force is that exerted by the departmental promotion and salary committee. There is a distinct decline in its perceived influence across ranks. This is surely accounted for by the high pressure to gain tenure by assistants and the relatively low pressure by the associates to be promoted to full professors. One associate said, "I don't feel in the least bit pressured by that, because it's really rather immaterial to me whether I get promoted or not." The only influence that the departmental committee has upon the full professors is with respect to salary increases, and, since the salary distribution is relatively flat, the pressure exerted upon this highest rank by the departmental committee is small. An alternative explanation is that, along with higher rank, comes a realization that

TABLE ONE Summary table of mapping rank on to selected environmental factors

	Assistant Professor N= 7	Associate Professor N= 11	Professor N= 4
Departmental Promotion/Salary Committee	100% (7)	45% (5)	25% (1)
Central University Administration	14% (1)	82% (9)	25% (1)
National Professional Organization	43% (3)	55% (6)	75% (3)
Public School Personnel	43% (3)	27% (3)	50% (2)
Federal and State Government	29% (2)	64% (7)	25% (1)
Accrediting and Certification Agencies	14% (1)	55% (6)	0
Personal	43% (3)	73% (8)	75% (3)

much of the policy is made at a higher level of the university administration. The departmental committee is important only as it carries out the policy; thus it is perceived as having little influence.

2. Personal influence

Personal influence is high across all ranks but does increase with rank. It is expressed in comments such as "... I think a lot of my own self esteem is tied up in the description of my job and so it's very natural for me to do my job." and "... you're going to do everything that's expected here but that's not going to get you anywhere within a field. For that, you write and work for yourself...I always set my goals higher than I'm going to get. I always throw myself out another carrot, so I'll never get there." There is a pressure to retain self esteem. This is linked closely with a desire for freedom which is seen as an essential component of an environment which permits the associate professors and professors to be as personnaly driven as they are. The assistant professors probably do not differ at all in this basic personal drive but, because of their almost all absorbing concern with tenure, they are forced to be influenced by more external factors.

3. Federal and State Government

A dramatic difference can be observed in the perceived influence of the federal and state government. The associate professors recognize government as an important source of influence because of its financial allocations which impact faculty members in two ways. First, research and development grants are awarded by the federal government directly to faculty members. Second, the government identifies priority areas in the public schools for change and this in turn forces teacher educators to make programmatic changes. One example cited was the extension of the government interest from reading

exclusively to include other language arts. The fact that the full professors did not see the federal government as a source of influence seems strange and may be a result of the extremely small sample interviewed at that rank or it may reflect a limited involvment in grant writing and program development by that professorial rank.

4. Professional organizations

There is an increase in power and type of influence of national professional networks with rank. Those assistant professors who expressed being influenced by national professional organizations saw the influence in the form of an arena in which to present papers - they did not express the influence as a source of colleaguial interaction. This is a further example of the obvious influence of the striving for tenure by this rank. Associate professors, however, see the professional organizations as important for setting research directions, for colleaguial interaction and for personal growth. Professors tend to express the influence in terms of their own active involvement as office holders. In general, those persons who became active in a national network in the early stages of their university career were those persons who, in the description of their graduate training, referred to an involvement with faculty members in professional activities. The socialization process began while in graduate school.

5. Central university administration

Influence from the university beyond the department was not apparent among the assistant professors. Presumably they do not have the time or opportunities to be involved. Interestingly, awareness of influence from the central university administration is apparent to the greatest extent to the associate professors.

Some associates see it as being a political structure in which they personally can and do get involved. Other associate professors see it as a clear step in the decision making of the entire university - questions are posed regarding the decisions made by the central administration related to different departments and different faculty roles. Professors in the sample interviewed did not describe the central administration as a source of influence. This may be, as for the departmental salary and promotion committee, because they are not concerned with promotion, nor do they see any personal values to be derived from being politically involved.

B Faculty Role - teaching assignment

For this analysis faculty members were classified into one of three groups according to the location in which they taught their classes.

a. Undergraduate classes solely campus based.

b. Undergraduate courses taught both on campus and in the field.

c. Undergraduate courses taught in the field as part of the clinical sequence.

The classification so derived is not related to professorial rank. There is a preponderance of assistant professors in category B but there are all ranks in all categories.

Insert TABLE TWO about here.

Again, as in the previous analysis section, one has to be very tentative regarding conclusions because of the sample characteristics.

1. Accrediting and certification agencies

Persons conducting most of their teaching in the field do not perceive the accrediting and certification agencies as important influences, whereas those persons conducting most of their teaching on campus regard them as an important influence. This is a peculiar finding and may result from the small

TABLE TWO Summary table of mapping teaching location on to selected environmental factors

	Non-school N= 7	Mixed N= 11	School N= 4
Departmental Promotion/Salary Committee	43% (3)	82% (9)	25% (1)
Central University Administration	63% (4)	55% (6)	25% (1)
National Professional Organization	43% (3)	73% (8)	25% (1)
Public School Personnel	0	36% (4)	100% (4)
Federal and State Government	71% (5)	45% (5)	0
Accrediting and Certification Agencies	43% (3)	36% (4)	0
Personal	86% (6)	64% (7)	25% (1)

sample deeply involved in the schools. It may, however, result from the assumption by the field based faculty that the programs in which they are involved are those most highly prized by the accrediting agencies. These faculty selected the field as the location for their teaching because that is where they personally wish to be and not because of any influence by the agencies. However, they do not suggest strong personal influences as would be expected if this were their reasoning.

2. Federal government

As with accrediting agencies, more influence is perceived from the federal government by campus based faculty than field based. This probably results from the greater involvement by campus based faculty with research activities. Generally, field based faculty are less research oriented and engage in fewer grant writing activities.

3. Public Schools

As would be expected, those faculty members spending considerable time in the field recognize the power of the public schools. They express this influence both as a limiting control over the activities in which their students are engaged and also as a positive factor for more realistic program development. It is not difficult to hypothesise why those faculty members who are campus based do not feel any influence of significance from the public schools.

Conclusions

As was stated earlier, these results must be treated tentatively because of the sample limitations. Currently the investigator is planning studies to collect two additional types of data:

1. generalizability data
2. direct information on causes for the observed differences.

It is however, of interest for persons looking at the relative levels of functioning of teacher educators to consider the environmental variables discussed in this paper. Some consideration should be given to these, and later data from the project, regarding the effects of socialization of teacher educators both as this socialization impacts the faculty members directly and the programs that are developed for future teacher educators.

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